

on bringing into their lives the power of higher ideals that they served their fellows best, not by what they destroyed, but by what they revealed and made credible. To many who surrounded them those eager seekers for the better life seemed to be pursuing dreams as evanescent as the rainbow and seeking ends as unreal as the pot of gold that lies concealed where the arch of radiant mist rests on the ground. But the mountains stand distinct and immovable, though the near-sighted do not see them; to the far-sighted they are as real and solid as the earth beneath their feet. Men have followed dreams and fallen in a vain, though not always barren, pursuit of them; but those who see further than their fellows and live in the larger relations which their vision reveals to them, are of all men most rational."

THE SUPPLY AND DEMAND OF STUDENTS IN THE NURSE TRAINING-SCHOOLS.

BY ANNA L. ALLINE

WE have heard not infrequently of late that the number of applicants to the training-schools is decreasing. The facts do not bear out this statement. We find in the statistics that the increase in the number of student nurses is at the rate of several hundred a year. To give it in round numbers: in 1890, there were one thousand five hundred students in the schools; in 1900, eleven thousand; in 1903, the date of the latest available statistics, there were thirteen thousand seven hundred. This goes to show that it is an increase in the demand rather than a decrease in supply. This surely is a matter of encouragement. Nurse training came as a response to a need and has, through the power wrought from intelligence, fidelity and self-sacrifice, become a permanent institution, really essential to the welfare of human kind, and so closely allied to the medical profession that they are inseparable. We may well turn back once more and call to mind that it is woman's work and appeals to all that is highest and best in her. The mother nature always has, and always will, turn to the care of the helpless, whether it is the helplessness of infancy, sickness or old age. It will not change; there will always be that element in it that appeals to woman, and always that nature in woman that responds to the need. We can rest assured of an increasing demand and can be equally sure that there will always be a large proportion of women who prefer this form of occupation to all others.

In preparing to open this discussion, a letter of inquiry was sent to the schools represented in this Society. Many replies were received not

only of definite information asked, in the form of statistics, but long letters of explanation and description of conditions, which are of great value. A study of the reports of these schools, together with a personal knowledge of training-schools from Maine to California and visits to nearly a hundred schools in the past six months, has convinced me that our problem is one of conditions in the schools. While we have schools all over the country, in the city and rural district—large schools and small schools that have, up to date, had no difficulty in filling their classes with desirable students; and this, too, when the course was increased in length from two to three years; some making monthly allowances, and some on the non-payment basis; some requiring a high school diploma for admission, and others, one year in the high school or its equivalent, it is equally true that some schools are not receiving enough applicants and are greatly distressed. The uneven distribution thus shown is directly due to the state we have long been struggling to produce. In our early years of organized effort, many a question was left unanswered, except by the phrase "We must educate the people." This has been accomplished to a considerable extent, one result being that a prospective nurse applies to several schools for information and naturally chooses the one that will best fit her for her chosen work and not leave her broken down in health and spirits, a rather wise and not at all unreasonable foresight. Her selection is finally made after a study of many features. Let us consider some of these features.

The reputation of the school is of no small moment: her history and traditions are as far-reaching as doctors, nurses and patients travel. One of the strongest factors working for good is a competent superintendent having a long term of service. When a superintendent severs her connection with a school, there is usually a period of two or more years during which the position is filled by a succession of people, for varying lengths of time, with a senior nurse filling in between, till the course of instruction is a farce; discipline is most lax; and the school in a deplorable condition. This reacts directly on the care of the patients and the public confidence is shaken. It takes years to get the school back to a good standard and there is always a class or two graduated that has not had thorough training. Often the superintendent takes more responsibility than she can handle well: superintendent of hospital and training-school, medical interne, housekeeper, drug clerk and so on, actually attempting to carry out the detail work of each office. What instruction can she give? How can she fulfill her promises to the students to give them a course of training? She cannot and she knows that she cannot. If she is unable to demonstrate this to the Board in such a way as to be

afforded sufficient assistance to meet these obligations, the responsibility should be no longer continued. Furthermore, the instruction should not be just what could be given impromptu. Lessons should be prepared and the *method* of instruction given much attention. Under such conditions as our class work is given, it requires even greater ability to teach than under model conditions. College professors read, study and discuss subject matter and method all the time in order to properly instruct their students. From what we know of the teaching in the training-schools, is it any wonder that the nurses fear the state examination? We institute state regulations; it is for us to see that the instruction is provided and that sufficient time is given the student to enable her to profit by it. It is to be hoped that the time has come when we can speak of the relation between superintendent and nurse as that of teacher and student, and that it means friendship rather than the feeling and attitude of superior and subordinate. I have recently found instances of the form of discipline that humiliates. That is always degrading; it cannot be uplifting. It is well for us as those having charge of this important work to have a season of self-examination, see where we stand, find out if we are true, search for the weak points, and aim to strengthen them.

With our prospective applicant let us look at the schools themselves and we may see that remedies can be suggested to improve conditions—*sane* remedies. The hours, of course, must still come first and we again have our mathematical problem. How else can we present it with such force? Seven days a week instead of six. Fifty weeks in a year, not to mention six legal holidays, recognized in all walks of life except nursing, which takes a working week out of the fifty. Seven working days mean fifty-six hours a week; no other occupation requires even that number. While this is the least that is possible for a student nurse, many are the ways of increasing them. Six to nine months of the course is spent on night duty and the nights are twelve hours long, eighty-four hours a week. This eight to ten-hour day and twelve-hour night is not mental work alone, nor entirely physical. It is both and it is both of them all the time. Over and above this time of physical and mental occupation, which is quite enough to expect of mortal woman, one is supposed to pursue certain studies, and even this is not the end. If nurses on duty all day do not attend class in the evening, they relieve night nurses for class. Night nurses in some schools are called at one o'clock in the afternoon to attend classes. More often than not, nurses assigned to maternity, emergency and operating-room service are "on call" night as well as day for weeks at a time. We all know these things only too well, but they will have to be the burden of our song till these pernicious

practices have ceased. Pernicious is not too strong a term, for such demands rob a woman of her health, which is all the capital a nurse has. It is her right to guard it and it should be the care of all hospital authorities to see that her health is maintained throughout the course.

The next essential of proper conditions is a room for each nurse, away from the hospital atmosphere, plain, comfortable and healthful. The question of food needs also to be kept before us. As a rule, good food material is purchased, but it is not properly cooked or served. One point that need never occur is the unvarying menu. To be able to say to-day what will be served to you the first, second and third day of every week and every month is in itself enough to rob you of an appetite for it. Food poorly cooked or served is an extravagance and this is one instance where hospital economy is seldom practiced, however much it is preached. These points are more or less known to the applicant and considered by her and her friends. She also looks to the requirements for admission. From a careful study of the reports sent in and the schools themselves, I find that it is not the long course that keeps out the nurses. In fact, it has little bearing on the subject. The general feeling of our superintendents—in fact, of all graduate nurses—is that the three years are necessary, unless the students can come to the schools much better prepared than are the majority of those in training. More years in school attendance and better home training—otherwise, a preparatory course is the only substitute for the approved term. This leaves the two years' course quite out of the question. The non-payment system and the monthly allowance for years past have been discussed from every point of view. Out of the seventy-nine schools reporting on this, eleven make no allowance of money, only three of these mention non-payment as a cause for a decrease in applications. The length of course in these eleven schools ranges from two and one-half to three and one-half years; two of them ask a fee for the preliminary course; several require high school diplomas for admission; some have the eight-hour system; and all have nurses' homes. With these varying conditions the non-payment system may be said to have practically no effect on the question.

Raising the standards has been suggested as a cause of our difficulty. Can we not honestly say that raising the standard tends to improve conditions and call in a larger number, because it will be better worth while? This has been proven time and again, the world over. We are not so unlike other people. The road we are traveling is new to us, but has been traveled many a time before. One year in the high school, or its equivalent, is not high, it really is as low as can be accepted, if we call it a school at all. It means virtually this: that a girl leaves school

at the age of fifteen and for the six years prior to entering the training-school, she has not occupied herself in a profitable way; for six years she has been contented to drift. It will take a year at least to get her into the proper attitude to apply herself or receive instruction. There are two evils resulting from placing these incompetent women in the school. First, we are caring for our sick with an inferior grade of women, which we have no right to do, and second, we are doing a great injustice to the graduates of the school, as well as to the better class of students. Can we shirk such responsibilities? Any school, under such conditions, runs down; the right kind of women will not enter; and its graduates will not recommend it. Patients, too, soon learn to go to the hospital where they may have intelligent care. Any hospital attempting to care for its patients without proper consideration for its nursing force, is accepting patients under false pretences just as much as it would in having quacks instead of doctors or adulterating the drugs. Such things are termed criminal practice. The whole trend of the times is toward better educational advantages. We not only desire but have great need to fall in line, to help and be helped. The very subjects we would outline for a preparatory school are being developed in the high school course. Things are coming our way and we must be alive and alert, when the opportunity offers and not let it pass by. While the high schools and our preparatory schools are uniting on common ground, the betterment of the conditions in our schools should claim our attention. This is really what we are doing, but we must have any amount of patience, courage and perseverance. How are we doing it?

To quote from the nurse practice act of the State of New York after stating the minimum requirements, it reads: "and registered by the University of the State of New York, as maintaining in this and other respects proper standards, all of which shall be determined by said Regents." The minimum requirements are specified, but "other respects" gives a wide scope, not only in the matter of instruction, but number and kind of instructors, hours, housing, food, cleanliness, general appearance, and all things which tend toward the better qualified nurse. For the most part criticism of the schools has been received kindly; it is given in a kind spirit with the sole purpose of being helpful. It is directed to the officer immediately responsible, whether it be the superintendent of the school, chairman of the committee or president of the board. In this way it is decidedly educational. It often cuts close to the nerve and gives another point of view; it is having good effect. There are some, of course, who do not wish to conform to the regulations. It is to their advantage, through the medium of the purse,

or otherwise, to continue in the old way. This is a simple matter. They go on in their own way. The name is stricken from the list of registered schools and the regents have no further responsibility. Do we fully realize that this method of procedure gives us two classes of nurses? Those of the first class are registered; those of the second are not. The outcome of this must be progress. We will have schools that are schools—not treadmills. We must be reasonable in our demands of students and reasonable in our care of them and their instruction. This can be done where the facilities are limited, by the development of school affiliations. To further this development it is important to have definite contracts in regard to time, number of students and subject, placing these contracts on file in each institution. Schools should make their course of instruction more uniform, that affiliation need not seriously affect the theoretical course. Much can be done by the study of a systematic outline such as the one suggested by the State Board in New York. Complete records should be kept of the standing of each student, the practical and theoretical course covered by each and the full outline of the course in progress. This will preclude the interruption of the course by a change in officers and be especially helpful to the students in training. Superintendents should be registered nurses, have registered assistants and registered permanent head nurses. Registration should be required for eligibility to membership in all our societies.

Honest advertising is perfectly legitimate and commendable. State the case attractively and fairly. Then see to it that you make it good. Advertise in periodicals of widest circulation among the class you desire for the work. A consistent solution of the whole question may be expressed in four words—standards, inspection, registration and examinations. Inspection is a means of keeping the schools up to the standard, making registration effective and examinations practicable. To insist on registration of schools and nurses or attempting to force the matter is futile. Let them decide in what class they wish to be. It is more effectual to lead people than to push them. There is always room at the top and competition is a healthful stimulus. It is the policy of the Education Department of the State of New York to be tolerant of conditions so long as there is evidence of honest effort toward improvement. More than this, the Department is ready to assist in every possible way. It is a matter of education to the recipients whether they be students of the school, officers in charge, or even ladies' boards and trustees. On the other side, the Department is just as ready to sever connections with any institution which cannot for good reasons, or will not for other reasons, meet the requirements. The regents have the

necessary power and from my personal experience, though limited as to time, as you know, I am confident that for New York State, at least, our future is secure, if we do our part and work together quietly, rationally and steadily.

WHAT WE ARE OVERLOOKING OF FUNDAMENTAL IMPORTANCE IN THE TRAINING OF THE MODERN NURSE.

By M. E. P. DAVIS

WHENEVER it is suggested that I attempt to formulate ideas and put them on paper, I am at once reminded of the remark of a noted actor who said: "It is so *easy not* to write a drama that I wonder so many persist in doing it." My present attitude may look like that same foolish persistence in deliberately making effort in the least easy direction. A little explanation will perhaps disabuse your minds of the fear that you are to be "victimized" listening to a tiresome paper setting forth arbitrary views. When I, with the other members, was asked to suggest a topic for discussion at this meeting, I took it literally and at once jumped to a conclusion, and made a snap diagnosis.

I had a little conversation with myself, and I said, "This is a delightful innovation. The Council means to select the most interesting subjects, send a list to each member, or better, publish the list in the *JOURNAL*, so that each may come prepared with her pros and cons gathered from her experience, more or less convincingly expressed, according to the degree of her positive belief in, or her disapproval of, the points under discussion, stimulating others by her personality to a fuller expression of their opinions, so that new ideas, bare facts or actual experiment may become common property."

Now here was an opportunity to get views on what has long appeared to me an all-important point, the systematic development and co-ordination of the trinity of the pupil, which we are careful to speak of, as the co-operation of head, hands and heart (the intellect, the physical and the humanities). I forthwith grasped the opportunity, posted my topic to the secretary and thought little more about it, till I was notified that the Council thought the subject interesting (or mystifying) enough to select it as a subject for discussion, and agreed that I would be the proper person to put the matter before you, the natural inference being that I knew what I was talking about. I *do* know some of the things, and wishing to know more, consented—not to write a paper but to introduce the subject, "What We Are Overlooking of Fundamental Importance in the Training of the Modern Nurse."